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ABSTRACT

This study investigated which categories of downgraders in requests is more learnable, and therefore, more teachable. Specifically, the study compared three categories of downgraders: internally modified syntactic downgraders (e.g., conditionals, aspects, interrogatives); internally modified lexical-phrasal downgraders (e.g., politeness markers, hedges, downtoners); and externally modified downgraders (e.g., preparators, grounders, disarmers). Adult students of English as a Second Language received instruction as the treatment, which was the combination of several activities (e.g., use of film, discussion, and students' data collection). The study provided inconclusive evidence of the learnability of downgraders as a category. Because of this, the researcher analyzed the data to ascertain which types of downgraders seem more learnable instead of which categories of downgraders. The study found that three types of downgraders (i.e., a downtoner, a disarmer, and the combination of past tense, aspect, and conditional clause) were the easiest for intermediate second language learners to learn. (Contains 23 references.) (Author/SM)

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Consciousness-Raising of Downgraders in Requests

ED 466 100

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Abstract

This study investigated which categories of downgraders in requests is more learnable, and therefore, more teachable. Specifically, the study compared three categories of downgraders: (1) internally modified syntactic downgraders (e.g., conditionals, aspects, interrogatives), (2) internally modified lexical-phrasal downgraders (e.g., politeness markers, hedges, downtoners) and (3) externally modified downgraders (e.g., preparators, grounders, disarmers). Students of English as a second language (henceforth, ESL) received instruction as the treatment, which was the combination of several activities (e.g., the use of film, discussion, students' data collection). The study provided inconclusive evidence to the learnability of downgraders as a category. Because of this, the researcher analyzed the data to ascertain which types of downgraders seem more learnable instead of which categories of downgraders. The study found that three types of downgraders (i.e., a downtoner, a disarmer, and the combination of past tense, aspect and conditional clause) were the easiest for intermediate second language (henceforth, L2) learners to learn.

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INTRODUCTION

Some studies have suggested that even advanced second language learners may not fully control pragmatics. For example, in Bardovi-Harlig and Hartford (1993), at university academic advising sessions, nonnative English-speakers were not as successful as native English-speakers in communicating with the advisors because the former continued to use fewer downgraders (e.g., *perhaps, I think*) for suggestions and more upgraders for rejections than the latter. Other studies have indicated that unguided learning of pragmatics seems slow. For instance, Bouton (1994) was interested in L2 learners' development of conversational implicature. When 436 international students arrived in the U.S., their interpretation of implicatures in American English was tested. After the four-and-a-half-year residence in the U.S., 30 of them took a revised test. The results showed that their interpretations of implicatures approximated native speakers' interpretations. To investigate how fast learning conversational implicature happens, another revised test was given to another group of participants who had resided in the U.S. for 17 months. This group mastered none of implicature that bothered them on arrival. These two empirical findings seem to suggest the need for the instructional intervention of pragmatics.

Some empirical studies have compared explicit instruction with implicit instruction (House, 1996; Tateyama, Kasper, Mui, Tay & Thananart, 1997) and seemed to suggest that explicitly taught students performed better than a comparison group who did not receive such instruction. Other studies have suggested some classroom activities, like drama (Short, 1981), role-plays (Bardovi-Harlig, Hartford, Mahan-Taylor, Morgan, & Reynolds, 1991) and videotape use (Rose, 1993, 1994) may be effective. Kasper (1997) reviewed 10 empirical studies and concluded that pragmatic knowledge, such as compliments (Billmyer, 1990), apologies (Olshtain & Cohen, 1990),

conversational implicature (Kubota, 1995), gambits (Wilder-Bassett, 1984) and the Japanese pragmatic routine formula, *sumimasen* (Tateyama, et al, 1997), could be taught. The present study will also explore this area, with its focus on downgraders in requests.

LITERATURE REVIEW OF DOWNGRADERS

Appendix A shows the downgraders that soften the impositive force of requests. Blum-Kulka, House & Kasper (1989) theoretically divided downgraders into three categories. Internally modified lexical-phrasal downgraders modify the Head Act (i.e., a linguistic element that realizes the speech act, request) internally through lexical and phrasal choices while internally modified syntactic downgraders modify the Head Act internally by means of syntactic choices. Externally modified downgraders are external to the Head Act, occurring either before or after it. These three theoretical divisions will be referred as the *categories* of downgraders for the purpose of convenience. Each category consists of specific *types* of downgraders, such as Hedges and Grounders.

Five studies have reported L2 learners' use of downgraders in addition to the above-mentioned Bardovi-Harlig and Hartford (1993) study. In Færch and Kasper (1989), both Danish learners of German and Danish learners of English overused the politeness marker (e.g., *please*), while under-using the downtoners (e.g., *possibly*). The researchers explained that, adhering to the principle of clarity, learners tended to overuse the politeness marker, while the efficient use of downtoners called for a higher pragmalinguistic competence. Learners also employed considerably more supportive moves than native speakers. In Ellis (1992), two beginning learners of English did not use many internal and external modifications in the classroom. In Nonaka (1998), more downgraders (e.g., *I think, I'm afraid, maybe, if possible*, etc.) were observed in the higher proficient learners. Some findings in Hill (1997) were that (1) Japanese learners of

English used less internal modification than native English-speakers at three proficiency levels, and Japanese learners of English increased their use as proficiency level increased; (2) advanced Japanese learners of English overused syntactic downgraders, while they underused lexical/phrasal downgraders and upgraders; (3) overall, there was development in the use of external modification as learners' proficiency levels increased. In Rose (1998), Cantonese learners of English had a tendency to use less external modification in low imposition scenarios. None of these studies examined the teachability of downgraders. The present study, on the other hand, involved teaching downgraders.

RESEARCH PURPOSES

This study addressed the following two research purposes.

(1) Which categories of downgraders are more learnable and therefore, more teachable, in requests:
   (a) Internally modified lexical-phrasal downgraders
   (b) Internally modified syntactic downgraders, or
   (c) Externally modified downgraders?

(2) To what extent do learners improve their ways of making requests after being taught these three categories of downgraders?

RESEARCH QUESTIONS

To investigate the teachability of downgraders, this study had 8 research questions.

(1) To what extent do learners' use of internally modified lexical-phrasal downgraders (Politeness markers, Downtoners, Understaters, Subjectivizers) increase after the treatment, measured by assessment of role-play performance?

(2) To what extent do learners' use of internally modified syntactic downgraders (Negation of a preparatory condition, Continuous aspects, Past tense, Conditional clause) increase after the treatment, measured by assessment of role-play performance?

(3) To what extent do learners' use of externally modified downgraders (Preparator, Disarmer, Grounder, Imposition minimizer) increase after the treatment, measured by assessment of role-play performance?

(4) To what extent do learners' use of internally modified lexical-phrasal downgraders (Politeness markers, Downtoners, Understaters, Subjectivizers) increase after the treatment, measured by Discourse Completion Tests?

(5) To what extent do learners' use of internally modified syntactic downgraders (Negation of a preparatory condition, Continuous aspects, Past tense, Conditional clause) increase after the treatment, measured by Discourse Completion Tests?

(6) To what extent do learners' use of externally modified downgraders (Preparator, Disarmer, Grounder, Imposition minimizer) increase after the treatment, measured by Discourse Completion Tests?

(7) To what extent do learners improve their ways of making requests after the treatment, measured by role-plays?

(8) To what extent do learners improve their ways of making requests after the treatment, measured by Discourse Completion Tests?

PROCEDURES

Participants

Twenty students at Hawai'i English Language Program (HELP) voluntarily participated in this study. However, data for 17 students (11 females and 6 males; 12 Japanese, 4 Koreans and 1 Taiwanese) were analyzed because of the loss of the data

from three of the students during the treatment. Their age ranged from 20 to 50. Eight of 17 students self-reported their TOEFL scores, which ranged from 430 to 512.

Research Design

One group, pretest-posttest design was adopted for this study.

Assessment

The students performed role-plays and took Discourse Completion Tests for the pre- and post- tests. Role-plays consisted of 3 situations (see Appendix B) and the Discourse Completion Tests had 8 situations (see Appendix C). All of these scenarios were taken from Hudson, Detmer & Brown (1995). Although each of 17 students performed four situations for the role-play, one situation (i.e., scenario 0 in Appendix B) among them was only for practice purposes. Students' role-play interactions were both audio- and video- taped. They performed the same scenarios for pre- and post- tests. Because learners' production of downgraders is situation-sensitive, the researcher decided to use the same scenarios instead of using equivalent, but different ones, which would be extremely difficult to create. There was a 5-week interval between the pre- and post- tests.

Treatment (Teaching Approach)

The treatment lasted for a period of 5 weeks. Six one-hour sessions were spent on the treatment. All of the sessions were both audio- and videotaped.

The Choice of Downgraders

A grammatical test (see Appendix D) was given to ascertain the 20 students' knowledge of conditional clauses, subjectives, aspects and the appropriate placements of adverbs (e.g., *perhaps, a bit, kind of, somewhat*). Based on the results of the test, four types of downgraders were chosen from each category (see Table 1). The categories of Politeness marker, Downtoner, Understater and Subjectivizer were chosen from

internally modified lexical-phrasal downgraders. The test revealed that 20 students knew the approapriate adverbial placements of these four downgraders better than other downgraders in this category. Negation of a Preparatory Condition, Continuous Aspect, Past Tense and Conditional Clause were chosen from internally modified syntactic downgraders. The test revealed that students knew the linguistic forms of Negations, Continuous Aspects, Past Tenses, and Conditional Clauses better than those of subjunctives and conditionals in this category. Preparator, Disarmer, Grounder, and Imposition Minimizer were chosen from externally modified downgraders.

By watching the videotape of classroom interaction after each session, the researcher measured the time allocated to each downgrader and approximately equalized the time after four sessions in which the researchers taught the downgraders.

Table 1

Downgraders for Teaching in this Study

Internally Modified Lexical-phrasal	Internally Modified Syntactic	Externally Modified
(1) Politeness markers (*please*) (2) Downtoners (*perhaps*) (3) Understaters (*a bit*) (4) Subjectivizers (*I'm afraid*)	(1) Negation of a preparatory condition (*You wouldn't give me a lift, would you?*) (2) Aspect (*I'm wondering if I could audit the class.*) (3) Tense (*I wanted to ask you to present your paper a week earlier.*) (4) Conditional clause (It would fit in much *better if you could give your paper a week earlier than planned.*)	(1) Preparator (*Can I ask you something?*) (2) Disarmer (*I know you don't like lending out your notes,* but could you make an exception this time?) (3) Grounder (*I missed class yesterday.* Can I borrow your notes?) (4) Imposition minimizer (Would you give me a lift, *but only if you are going my way.*)

Blum-Kulka, House & Kasper (1989)

Consciousness-Raising Tasks

In the first session of the instruction, the students watched a segment of *Forest Gump* to deduce the students' social rules. They used the analysis worksheet (Rose, 1993, 1994), which consists of participants, their relationships (i.e., social distance and dominance), a situation, and the nature of a request (see Appendix E).

Explicit Instruction

The students received explicit instruction on three sociolinguistic factors (i.e., power, distance and imposition), request patterns (i.e., alerters, Head acts and supporting moves) and directness levels of request strategies (see Appendix F). The students also received explicit instruction on downgraders. Two examples for each type of downgrader were used in the classroom (see Appendix G). The teacher avoided using as much metalinguistic terminology (e.g., downgraders, conditionals, subjectivizers, disarmer) as possible.

Students' Data Collection

As an assignment, the students were asked to collect data on making requests (see Appendix H). They could collect such data by watching TV and films, observing, note-taking and tape-recording students' interactions with librarians, friends and instructors. They were told to describe the setting and the relationships of interlocutors. The purpose of students' data collection was two-fold: one, to let the students be aware of linguistic forms of requests and social settings in which requests were employed; two, for the teacher to use the students' collected data in the classroom.

Role-Plays

Role-plays were used for the students to practice using the downgraders (see Appendix I). While one pair of students was performing a role-play, other students filled out Role Play Feedback Form (see Appendix J).

DATA ANALYSIS

- To answer research questions from 1 to 6, a coding scheme for downgraders (see Appendix K) was adopted from Blum-Kulka, House & Kasper (1989), Hill (1997), Trosborg (1995) and Van Mulken (1996). The researcher coded all of the downgraders for both the role-play and the DCT data. After a training session, a native English-speaker (Rater A) rated about 25% (25 out of 102 interactions) of role-play data and about 20% (54 out of 272 interactions) of DCT data. Disagreement in coding was found between the two raters in 3 out of 25 interactions in the role-play data and 2 out of 54 interactions in the DCT data. More plausible coding was adopted in these cases.
- A t-test was conducted to compare the frequency of a downgrader (i.e., Disarmer) between the pretest and the posttest in the role-play data. α-level was set at .05.
- An ANOVA was conducted to compare the frequencies of three downgraders (Downtoner, Aspect and Disarmer) between the pretest and the posttest in the DCT data. α-level was set at .05.
- A qualitative analysis was conducted to describe some interactions that contained learners' use of downgraders.
- To answer research question 7, the overall appropriateness of learners' requests in the transcribed Role-plays was rated by two native English-speakers (Raters B & C) on a 4-point Likert Scale. Interrater reliability was calculated through the Pearson Correlation (Adjusted 0.65). 52.04% of the paired ratings matched exactly and 97.6% were within one point of each other. Considering the subjective rating of learners' performance, the researcher adopted the looser interpretation of "agreement" that included ratings that fell within one point of each other.

- To answer research question 7, a t-test was also conducted to compare the mean scores of the overall appropriateness between pretest and posttest. α-level was set at .05.
- To answer research question 8, the overall appropriateness of learners' requests by Discourse Completion Tests was also rated by two native English-speakers (Raters D & E) on a 4-point Likert Scale. Interrater reliability was calculated through the Pearson Correlation (Adjusted 0.72). 47% of the paired ratings matched exactly and 97.7% were within one point of each other.
- To answer research question 8, a t-test was also conducted to compare the mean scores of the overall appropriateness between pretest and posttest. α-level was set at .05.

MAJOR FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

1st Finding

This study provides inconclusive evidence to the Research Questions from 1 to 6, regarding which *categories* of downgraders are more learnable and therefore, more teachable, in requests. Table 2 shows the total frequencies of downgraders used in the role-plays and Table 3 shows the total frequencies of downgraders used in the DCT. The asterisks (*) in Tables 2 and 3 indicate the 12 downgraders taught in the treatment. "Improvement" simply means that the frequencies of downgraders in the pretest were deducted from ones in the posttest. Summarizing the downgraders with the asterisks (*) in Tables 2 and 3, Table 4 provides the total frequencies of three categories of downgraders taught in the treatment. Table 4 seems to suggest that learners' use of both internally modified lexical-phrasal (i.e., 23 improvements) and syntactic (i.e., 26 improvements) downgraders increased. However, this conclusion is misleading

because learners' use of one specific downgrader in each category of downgrader improved (see Findings 2 and 3 in detail).

Table 2

The Frequency of Downgraders Used in the Role-Plays

Downgrader	Pre-test	Post-test	Improvement
* Politeness Marker	4	4	0
* Downtoner	0	5	5
* Understater	0	0	0
* Subjectivizer	0	1	1
Hedge	0	0	0
Cajoler	0	0	0
Appealer	0	0	0
Subjective Opinion	0	0	0
Consultative Device	1	0	-1
* Negation of a Preparatory Condition	0	0	0
* Aspect	0	3	3
* Past Tense	0	1	1
* Conditional Clause	2	4	2
Subjunctive	0	0	0
Conditional	1	1	0
Interrogative	29	24	-5
Modal	2	1	-1
* Preparator	5	6	1
* Disarmer	1	12	11
* Grounder	36	37	1
* Imposition Minimizer	0	1	1
Promise of Reward	0	0	0
Sweetener	0	0	0
Confirmatory Strategy	5	2	-3
Anticipatory Gratitude	0	0	0
Apology	1	0	-1
Total	87	102	

*: Foci of the study

Table 3

The Frequency of Downgraders Used in the DCT

Downgrader	Pre-test	Post-test	Improvement
* Politeness Marker	20	20	0
* Downtoner	1	14	13
* Understater	1	4	3
* Subjectivizer	0	7	7
Hedge	0	0	0
Cajoler	0	0	0
Appealer	0	3	3
Subjective Opinion	2	4	2
Consultative Device	5	1	-4
* Negation of a Preparatory Condition	0	8	8
* Aspect	2	20	18
* Past Tense	0	2	2
* Conditional Clause	8	6	-2
Subjunctive	0	0	0
Conditional	0	1	1
Interrogative	86	66	-20
Modal	8	5	-3
* Preparator	11	13	2
* Disarmer	21	34	13
* Grounder	59	27	-32
* Imposition Minimizer	0	2	2
Promise of Reward	4	0	-4
Sweetener	1	1	0
Confirmatory Strategy	6	4	-2
Anticipatory Gratitude	0	1	1
Apology	4	2	-2
Total	239	245	

*: Foci of the study

Table 4

The Total Frequencies of Three Categories of Downgraders Taught in the Treatment

Categories	Pretest (Role-plays)	Posttest (Role-plays)	Improve-ment	Pretest (DCT)	Posttest (DCT)	Improve-ment
Lexical	4	10	6	22	45	23
Syntactic	2	8	6	10	36	26
External	42	56	14	91	76	-15

2nd Finding

An analysis of the *types*, as opposed to the *categories*, of downgraders that seem more learnable was carried out. The descriptive statistics for the role-play data (see Table 5) shows that the improvement of Disarmers used in the role-plays is outstanding among the downgraders. To confirm the difference statistically, a t-test was conducted and the difference was found statistically significant at $p < .011$, $T(1, 16) = 2.864$. Two examples of learners' use of Disarmers are shown below.

Table 5

The Frequencies of Downgraders Used in the Role-Plays

Downgraders	Pretest	Posttest	Improvement
Disarmer	1	12	11

• Examples of Disarmers from post-instruction

Y: I know this week is my turn to mow, but I'm going to town with my friends. So, perhaps I'll do next week.
O: O. K.
Y: Thank you.

Overall appropriateness: 2 & 2 = Average 2
A response in scenario (2) in Appendix B

Y: Excuse me. I know you are so busy right now, but ah, I have to pay my tuition by (...). So, I need you to accept my application.
O: I accept your application, but it'll take two weeks to be processed.
Y: It's late for my deadline, so can I ask to hurry to.
O: We'll do as fast as we can. We can't guarantee anything less than two weeks.
Y: O. K. fine, thank you.

Overall appropriateness: 3 & 3 = Average 3
A response in scenario (1) in Appendix B

3rd Finding

The descriptive statistics in the DCT data showed that the improvements of Downtoners, Aspect, and Disarmers stood out. Table 6 shows the frequencies of the three downgraders used in the DCT and Table 7 demonstrates the means, standard deviations and standard errors of Downtoner, Aspect, and Disarmer. To confirm this

differences, an ANOVA was conducted and the differences were found statistically significant, $F(1, 16) = 14.681$, $p < .0015$. Three examples of learners' use of a Downtoner and Aspect are shown below.

Table 6

The Frequencies of Downgraders Used in the DCT

Downgraders	Pretest	Posttest	Improvement
Downtoner	1	14	13
Aspect	2	20	18
Disarmer	21	34	13

Table 7

Means, Standard Deviation and Standard Error of Downtoner, Aspect, and Disarmer

Downgraders	Mean	SD	SE
Downtoner-Pre	0.118	0.332	0.081
Downtoner-Post	1.176	1.185	0.287
Aspect-Pre	0.059	0.243	0.059
Aspect-Post	0.824	0.951	0.231
Disarmer-Pre	1.235	1.033	0.250
Disarmer-Post	2.000	1.581	0.383

- An example of Downtoner from post-instruction

Excuse me, can you *perhaps* give me an application form?

Overall appropriateness: 4 & 3 = Average 3.5
A response in scenario (4) in Appendix C

- Examples of Aspects from post-instruction

I'm thinking about an interview. I know you're very busy, but I'm working in the afternoon right now. So *I was wondering if* you could perhaps allow me the time to meet me in the morning.

Overall appropriateness: 4 & 4 = Average 4
A response in scenario (1) in Appendix C

Excuse me, I was wondering if you could help with the assignment.

Overall appropriateness: 3 & 2 = Average 2.5
A response in scenario (5) in Appendix C

4th Finding

Although the frequency of downgraders increased, not all of the students' uses of downgraders were successful. Four types of unsuccessful examples from post-instruction in DCT are listed below. From these unsuccessful examples, the teacher had an impression that input flood may not be an effective way of teaching downgraders. It is assumed that some of the students inappropriately used the downgraders because the instructor in the treatment did not provide a satisfactory number of examples to show the ways downgraders were used.

- The overgeneralization of a Downtoner: From *perhaps* to *probably*

I was wondering if you could *probably* provide me the information which you have related my assignment.

- The confusion of Aspect with a Subjectivizer (*I'm afraid*)

I afraid if you could help me with the assignment.

- The misuse of a Subjectivizer (*I believe*)

Excuse me, I know you are very busy. *I believe* you are going to change my schedule from afternoon to morning.

- The misuse of a Preparator

Excuse me. *Could you do me a favor?* Would you give me an application form?

5th Finding

Although the frequency of downgraders used increased after the treatment, the instruction was not effective for all of the students. Table 8 shows how many students (out of 17) used downgraders in the pre- and post-tests. In the role-play, for instance, while one student used a Disarmer in the pretest, only 7 out of 17 students used 12 Disarmers in the posttest. In the DCT, while one student used a Downtoner in the pretest, 9 students used 14 Downtoners in the posttest.

Table 8

The Number of Students Used the Downgraders in the Pre- and Post-Tests

	Frequencies of downgraders in pretest	Used by how many students	Frequencies of downgraders in posttest	Used by how many students
Disarmer (Role-play)	1	1	12	7
Downtoner (DCT)	1	1	14	9
Aspect (DCT)	2	2	20	11
Disarmer (DCT)	21	14	34	14

6th Finding

Answering Research Questions (7) and (8), the rating of learners' performance according to overall appropriateness revealed that learners did not improve their ways of making requests after the treatment, measured both by role-plays and DCT. Table 9 shows the mean scores of the Role-Play in the pre- and post- tests; the mean score went down from 2.24 in the pretest to 2.17 in the posttest. A t-test indicates that this is *not* statistically significant, $T(1, 50) = 0.481$. Table 10 shows the mean scores of the DCT in the pre- and post- tests; the mean score went down from 2.49 in the pretest to 2.40 in the posttest. A t-test indicates that this is *not* statistically significant, $T(1, 135) = 1.116$.

Table 9

Means and Variance of the Role-Play Scores in the Pre- and Post- Tests

	Pretest	Posttest
Mean	2.24	2.17
Variance	0.567	0.519

Table 10

Means and Variance of the DCT Scores in the Pre- and Post- Tests

	Pretest	Posttest
Mean	2.49	2.40
Variance	0.844	0.793

A plausible explanation for the decrease of mean scores may be that, after the treatment, the increase of downgraders as a whole was not substantial enough to have an effect on the rating. Another reason may be that the students could not appropriately use downgraders, as demonstrated in the 4th finding. More importantly, the criteria by which native speakers rated non-native speakers' performance are unknown.

THE LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY

The major limitation of this study lies in the fact that there was no control group and, therefore, it cannot claim that the increase of the downgraders was due to the treatment. In addition, this study was product-oriented classroom research. It cannot explain the process of the instruction, that is, what went on during the treatment and why learners' use of the particular downgraders increased.

IMPLICATIONS

More research is needed to investigate the teachability of pragmatics, including downgraders. The fact is that most learners do not receive formal instruction on downgraders. Even though they know what *perhaps* means, they are hardly taught the function of *perhaps* in requests explicitly.

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Appendix A

Downgraders

	Internal Modifications	External Modifications
Down-graders	Syntactic Downgrades (1) Interrogatives (*Can I borrow your pen?*) (2) Negation of a preparatory condition (*You couldn't give me a lift, could you?*) (3) Subjunctives (*Might be better if you were to leave now.*) (4) Conditionals (*I would suggest you leave now.*) (5) Aspect (*I'm wondering if I could audit the class.*) (6) Tense of verbs (*I wanted to ask you to present your paper a week earlier.*) (7) Conditional clause (It would fit in much *better if you could give your paper a week earlier than planned.*) (8) Combinations of the above (*I was wondering if I couldn't get a lift home with you.*) Lexical Phrasal Downgraders (9) Politeness markers (*please*) (10) Understaters (*a bit*) (11) Hedges (*somewhat*) (12) Subjectivizers (*I'm afraid*) (13) Downtoners (*perhaps*) (14) Cajolers (*You know*) (15) Appealers (Tags) (16) Combinations of the above	(1) Preparator (*Can I ask you something?*) (2) Getting a precommitment (*Could you do me a favor?*) (3) Grounder (*I missed class yesterday.* Can I borrow your notes?) (4) Disarmer (*I know you don't like lending out your notes,* but could you make an exception this time?) (5) Promise of reward (Could you give me a lift home? *I'll pitch in on some gas.*) (6) Imposition minimizer (Would you give me a lift, *but only if you are going my way.*)

Blum-Kulka, House & Kasper (1989)

Appendix B

Role-Plays

Adopted from Hudson, Detmer & Brown (1995)

(0) You are member of the local chapter of a national ski club. Every month the club goes on a ski trip. You are in a meeting with the club president, helping plan this month's trip. You want to borrow some paper in order to take some notes.

You say:

---

(1) You are applying for a student loan at a small bank. You are now meeting with the loan officer. The loan officer is the only person who reviews the applications at this bank. The loan officer tells you that there are many other applicants and that it should take two weeks to review your application. However, you want the loan to be processed as soon as possible in order to pay your tuition by the deadline.

You say:

(2) You rent a room in a large house. The person who holds the lease lives in the house as well. You are responsible for mowing the lawn every week, a job that takes you about two hours to do. You want the lease-holder to mow the lawn for you this week because you are going out of town. You are in the living room when the lease-holder walks in.

You say:

(3) You work in a restaurant. You have just taken a customer's order and are ready to leave the table. The customer is still holding the menu and you need it for another table.

You say:

Appendix C

DCT

Adopted from Hudson, Detmer & Brown (1995)

Directions: Read each of the situations on the following pages. After each situation write what you would say in the situation in a normal conversation.

1. You are applying for a new job in a small company and want to make an appointment for an interview. You know the manager is very busy and only schedules interviews in the afternoon from one to four o'clock. However, you currently work in the afternoon. You want to schedule an interview in the morning. You go into the office this morning to turn in your application form you see the manager.

   You say:

2. You work in a small department of a large office. You are in a department meeting now. You need to borrow a pen in order to take some notes. The head of your department is sitting next to you and might have an extra pen.

   You say:

3. You are shopping for your friend's birthday and see something in a display case. You want to look at it more closely. A salesclerk comes over to you.

   You say:

4. You want to apply for a job in a small office. You want to get an application form. You go to the office and see the office manager sitting behind a desk.

   You say:

5. You have worked in a small department of a large office for a number of years and are the head of the department. You have just been given an extra heavy accounting assignment to do. You know that one of your co-workers in the department is especially skilled at bookkeeping. However, you also know that this person is very busy. You want your co-worker to help with the assignment. You go to the desk of your co-worker.

   You say:

6. You are the president of the local chapter of a national book club. The club reads and discusses a new book every month. You are at this month's meeting, talking with a member of the book club. You need to get the phone number of Sue Lee, another member of the club. You think this person has Sue's number.

   You say:

7. You work for a small department in a large office. The assistant manager of the office gave you a packet of materials to summarize for tomorrow. However, when you start working on the assignment, you realize that you do not have all of the information. You know that the head of the department has the information. You need to get the information, but know it will take the head of your department about an hour and a half to locate it. You see the head of the department.

   You say:

8. You are an office manager and are hiring to fill a position that has just opened up. Yesterday, many people filled out application forms for the job. The form is very long and takes most people many hours to complete. You are getting ready to interview an applicant, but cannot find the completed application in the files. You want the applicant to resubmit the application. The applicant is here now for the interview.

   You say:

Appendix D

A Grammar Test

Part I: Put *an* appropriate word into ____.
(1) You will come to my party, ____ you?
(2) We didn't go shopping yesterday, ____ ____?

Part II: The underlined word should be put into the *most* appropriate position in each sentence. Choose (A), (B), (C) or (D) in each sentence.

(1) somewhat	We (A) are (B) tired (C) after our long walk.
(2) possibly	He (A) may (B) decided (C) not to (D) come.
(3) kind of	It (A) was (B) strange (C) to see him (D) again.
(4) a little	She (A) was (B) worried (C) by the (D) noise.
(5) I believe	(A) He (or he) has (B) already (C) gone there.
(6) perhaps	I (A) will (B) go (C) there tomorrow.
(7) a bit	I (A) should (B) tidy up (C).
(8) possibly	(A) I (B) can't (C) walk (D) 20 miles in an hour.
(9) a bit	This dress (A) is (B) too (C) big for me (D).
(10) kind of	I (A) thought (B) you (C) would help me.
(11) I'm afraid	(A) I have (B) broken (C) your pen.
(12) a little	There is (A) room (B) for my sister in the (C) room.
(13) please	Clean (A) the vase (B) on the table (C).
(14) do you think	(A) you could (B) present your paper (C) nest week (D) ?

Part III: Choose the *most* appropriate word.
(1) I wish she ( ) married.
(A) is (B) was (C) are (D) were
(2) If only I ( ) not so nervous.
(A) am (B) was (C) are (D) were
(3) I would rather I ( ) in bed.
(A) am (B) was (C) are (D) were

Part IV: Rewrite the following sentence, using the *present progressive.*
I wonder if I could give me some information about it?
_____

Part V: Rewrite the following sentences, using the *past tense.*
I want to ask you about it.
_____
I am wondering whether you could go there.
_____

Part VI: Make any requests, using the following phrases.
(1) I am wondering _____?
(2) It would be better if _____?

Appendix E

Request Analysis Sheet

Situation

The Expression for the Request

Participants

Speaker Female / Male Age:

Hearer Female / Male Age:

Do they know each other? Yes / No

Relationship Speaker Hearer Speaker = Hearer Speaker Hearer

What did the speaker ask the hearer?

Appendix F

Making Requests

Three factors

(P) Power (the relative power of a speaker with respect to the hearer, such as rank within an organization, professional status)
Loan officer - loan applicant; Customer - salesperson
(D) Distance (Do speakers know each other?)
Manager - job applicant; Supervisor - worker
(I) Imposition (to force someone to do something)
To borrow a pen, to talk for a few minutes, to reschedule a plan, to get a phone number, to make a decision faster, to do extra work, and to move furniture in the house

Request Patterns Attention-getter + Head + Support
Tony, give me a beer, please. I'm very thirsty.
Attention-getter
Excuse me! listen! Hey! pronouns (*you*) titles (*Professor, waiter*)
names, such as surnames, first names and nicknames (*John*)
endearment terms (*Honey*) offensive terms (*Stupid cow*)
Head (The essential part to make requests)
Give me a beer, please.
Can I borrow a pen?
Why don't we go there right now?
Support (Reasons, explanations, etc.)
I'm very thirsty.
I need it to make some notes.

Request perspectives

(1) Hearer	Could *you* tidy up the kitchen soon?
(2) Speaker	Can *I* borrow a pen?
(3) Speaker & Hearer	Can *we* begin now?
(4) Impersonal (*people, they, one*)	Can *they* begin now?

Request (Directness means the degree to which requests are apparent from the sentences)

(1) Do it
Leave me alone; Clean up that mess.
(2) I'm asking you ~
I am asking you to clean up the mess.
(3) I have to ask you ~
I have to / must ask you to clean the kitchen right now.
(4) You'll have to ~
You'll have to / should/ must/ ought to move up that car.
(5) I'd like to ~; I want to ~
I 'd like to borrow your notes for a while.

(6) How about ~ / Why don't you ~
How about cleaning up? Why don't you go there?
(7) Can you ~; Can I ~; Would you ~
Can I borrow your notes? Could you clear up the kitchen?
(8) Hints
It's hot here? (to get a hearer to open the window)
I was absent yesterday. (to know the assignment)
Will you be going home now? (to get a lift home)

Appendix G

MAGIC to Soften the Impositive Force of Requests

MAGIC 1: *possibly, perhaps*

Could you *possibly* lend me your notes?
Can you *perhaps* go there instead of me?

MAGIC 2

Could you do me a favor? Would you lend me your notes from yesterday's class?
I need your help. Will you help me move out tomorrow?

MAGIC 3: *please, Do you think ~?*

Clean the kitchen, *please.*
Do you think you could present your paper this week?

MAGIC 4

I know you don't like lending out your notes, but could you make an exception this time?
I know you are busy right now, but can I talk to you?

MAGIC 5
I'm wondering if I could audit the class.
I'm hoping you will have a dinner with me.

MAGIC 6

John, I missed class yesterday. Can I borrow your notes?
I have something very important to do tomorrow. Do you think you could do it instead of me?

MAGIC 7 (*a bit, a little*)

Could you tidy up *a bit*?
Is there *a little* room for me in the car?

MAGIC 8

I wanted to ask you to present your paper a week earlier.
I was hoping you would (might) have a dinner with me.

MAGIC 9 (*I'm afraid, I believe*)

I'm afraid you are going to have to move your car.
I believe you are going my way.

MAGIC 10

Would you give me a lift, *but only if you are going my way*?
Will you help this problem out, *but only if you are not busy right now?*

MAGIC 11

You would*n't* give me a lift, would you?
Should*n't* you tidy up the kitchen?

MAGIC 12

It would fit in much better if you could give your paper a week earlier than planned.
I was wondering if you could present your paper a week earlier than planned.

Appendix H

Samples of Students' Self-Collected Data

Native: A native speaker of English
Non-native: A non-native speaker of English

- Collected by W
  Setting: In the hospital
  Participants: A: a nurse B: a FBI agent

A (Native): I'm very sorry. It's after hours. He is resting. I have to ask you to come back in the morning.
B (Native): I've come a long way. And I know he wants to see me.
A: I'm very sorry. It's the hospital policy.

- Collected by X
  Setting: In the hospital
  Participants: A nurse X

Nurse (Native): Maybe you can hold this gauze for me?
X (Non-native): Sure
Nurse: Thank you.

- Collected by Y
  Setting: Y left her message on her friend's Voice-pager after an argument.
  Participants: Chris, a 26-year-old friend Y

Y (Non-native): Hi, Chris! Just Y. I need to apologize to you about the argument last night. I think I was wrong and now I know how I insulted you, I want to say sorry to you, not on the Voice message. Will you perhaps call me when you have time. Bye! (I usually say, "Give me a call.")

- Collected by Z
  Setting: From a soap-opera on TV
  Participants: A: 22 years old B: 35-40 years old They are neighbors.

A (Native): Would you mind if I borrow your car today?
B (Native): Where you gonna go?
A: I want to buy a new TV today, so I need a car to bring it back.
B: I can go with you, if you like. Why don't we go together, then?
A: That's great. Don't you mind?

Appendix I

Scenarios for Exercises in the Class

(1) You have recently moved to a new city and are looking for an apartment to rent. You are looking at a place now. You like it a lot. The landlord explains what you seem like a good person for the apartment, but that there are a few more people who are interested. The landlord says that you will be called next week and told if you have the place. However, you need the landlord to tell you within the next three days.

(2) You are a member of a national ski club. You are on the club bus and have just arrived at the mountain. You are sitting near the club president. You see that the president is applying sun lotion. You want to use the president's lotion because you have forgotten to bring your own. You turn to the club president.

(3) You are a salesperson in a gift shop. You need to get something out of a display case now. However, you are unable to get into the case because a customer is standing in the way and blocking your path.

(4) You work in a small department office of a large office. You had an important meeting with the head of your department last week, but you had to cancel it because you got sick. The rescheduled meeting is for this afternoon. You came into the office his morning and felt okay. However, it is now lunch-hour and you are feeling sick again. You want to postpone today's meeting. You go to the office of the department head.

(5) You are writing a term paper for one of your classes. Your professor is a leading expert on the subject you have chosen for your paper, and you would like to interview her to get more information about your topic. You notice that her office hours have been canceled for two weeks but you need to speak with her soon because your paper is due at the end of those two weeks. You estimate that the interview will last for one hour.

Appendix J

Role Play Feedback Form

When you are watching your classmate role-playing a situation with the teacher, think about what s/he says and whether you think her or his speech and behavior are appropriate.

(1) What is your classmate saying?

(2) What MAGIC is your classmate using?

(3) Is your classmate polite enough or too polite?

(4) If her / his speech is inappropriate, what could s/he say to make it better?

Appendix K

A Coding Scheme for Downgraders

Downgraders	Situation 1	Situation 2	Situation 3
Politeness marker			
Downtoner			
Understater			
Subjectivizer			
Hedge			
Cajoler			
Appealer			
Subjective opinion			
Consultative device			
Negation of a preparatory condition			
Continuous aspect			
Past tense			
Conditional clause			
Subjunctive			
Conditional			
Interrogative			
Modal			
Preparator			
Disarmer			
Grounder			
Imposition minimizer			
Promise of reward			
Sweetener			
Confirmatory strategy			
Anticipatory gratitude			
Apology			
Mood derivables			
Explicit performatives			
Hedged performatives			
Locution Derivables			
Want statements			
Suggestory formulae			
Query preparatory			
Hints			

Adopted from Blum-Kulka, House & Kasper (1989), Hill (1997), Trosborg (1995) and Van Mulken (1996)

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